

*Guide to*

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# Advanced Business Services

*In Buffalo Niagara*



## Letter from Tom

Nearly 18 years ago, GEICO made the decision to invest in the future of Buffalo Niagara. Our organization, Invest Buffalo Niagara, supported the company with project management services and connections throughout the region. Since expanding, the company has hired over 3,300 workers.

Two years ago, AML RightSource, an anti-money laundering firm servicing financial institutions, came to the same conclusion. The company moved into Larkintown, hired over 100 employees, attracted talent from across the country, and leveraged higher education pipelines. Since, the company outgrew its space and moved into Seneca One Tower in downtown Buffalo, allowing for even more hires.

The business case made to GEICO and AML RightSource still holds true today. And it's one we've made to over 65 companies in advanced business services that have expanded or relocated their business to Buffalo Niagara.

Buffalo Niagara's access to talent, educational pipeline, affordable real estate options, and easily accessible location combine to make a compelling case to any professional services operation looking to expand or relocate.

Invest Buffalo Niagara offers complimentary and confidential business expansion project management. We lean on our extensive network of experts in their respective fields across our region. This guide is a compilation of their expertise.

Flip through this book, use what you need, and give us a call. We are happy to help.



### Tom Kucharski

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Invest Buffalo Niagara

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**INVEST**  
BUFFALO NIAGARA

Come grow your  
business with us.

257 West Genesee Street, Suite 600, Buffalo, NY 14202

**BUFFALONIAGARA.ORG**



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# #1 Best City

FOR A FRESH START

- Lending Tree, 2018



**BUFFALO'S FIRST SOFTWARE  
UNICORN, WITH A VALUATION  
over \$1 billion,  
MORE THAN 1,000 EMPLOYEES,  
AND A SUCCESSFUL IPO  
ON THE NASDAQ IN 2021**



# WORKFORCE STRENGTHS

6.2%

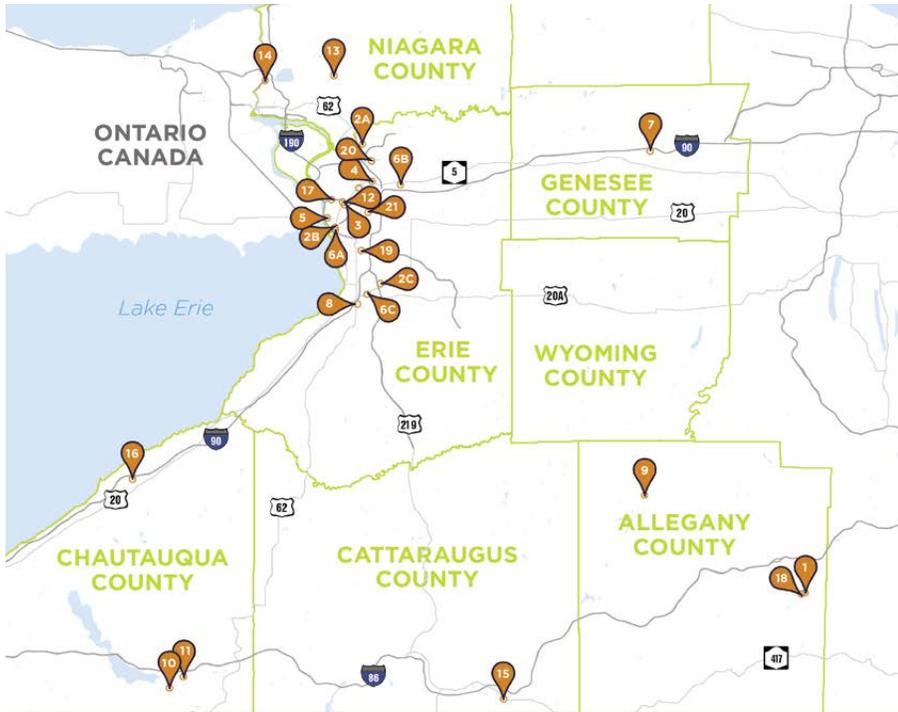
GROWTH IN MILLENNIAL POPULATION  
OVER THE LAST 5 YEARS

(NATIONAL AVG. = 4.7%)

21

COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES  
PRODUCING NEARLY 25,000 GRADS ANNUALLY

## Strong Educational Pipeline



### Talented Graduates

- 1 Alfred University
- 2A Bryant & Stratton Business Institute - Amherst
- 2B Bryant & Stratton Business Institute - Buffalo
- 2C Bryant & Stratton Business Institute - Southtowns
- 3 Canisius College
- 4 Daemen College
- 5 D'Youville College
- 6A SUNY Erie Community College - City Campus
- 6B SUNY Erie Community College - North Campus
- 6C SUNY Erie Community College - South Campus
- 7 Genesee Community College
- 8 Hilbert College
- 9 Houghton College
- 10 Jamestown Business College
- 11 Jamestown Community College
- 12 Medaille College
- 13 Niagara Community College
- 14 Niagara University
- 15 Saint Bonaventure University
- 16 SUNY at Fredonia
- 17 SUNY College at Buffalo
- 18 SUNY College of Technology at Alfred
- 19 Trocaire College
- 20 University at Buffalo
- 21 Villa Maria College

47 colleges and universities are located within 100 miles of downtown, significantly expanding the region's labor draw.

*Buffalo Niagara rates high among the following specialized skills and knowledge: Clerical, Computer & Electronics, Economics & Accounting, Negotiation, System Analytics, Mathematics, and Systems Evaluation.*

## Buffalo Niagara, More for Your Money

COST OF LIVING	
LOCATION	COST OF LIVING INDEX
Buffalo-Niagara Falls, NY	\$\$\$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ 94.0
Philadelphia, PA	\$\$\$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ 109.0
Miami, FL	\$\$\$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ 116.3
Chicago, IL	\$\$\$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ 123.0

Source: C2ER COLI 2021 Q2

\$ = 10 index points

## AVERAGE COMMUTE TIME:

21.7 MINUTES



5.9 minutes faster than  
the national average

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019



**Access to 6,800+**  
software developers within 60 miles



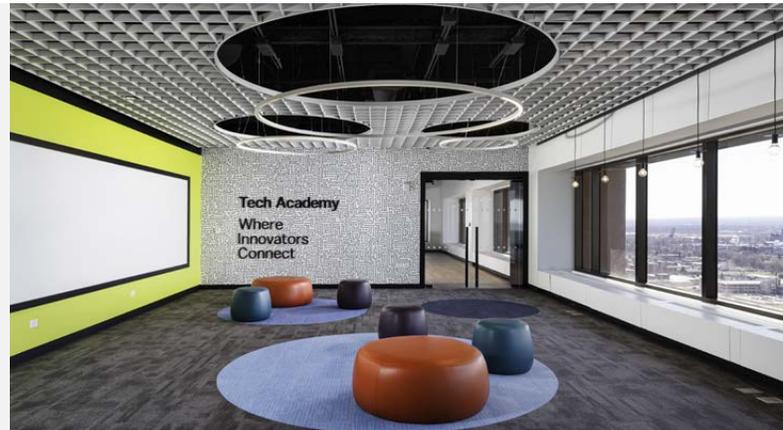
**Turnover rates 15% less**  
than other comparable metro regions



**Access to bilingual**  
employees and employees with a  
lack of regional accent

### The Tech Academy benefits neighbor companies

While established and run by M&T Bank, the Tech Academy is a community-wide asset. It serves as a home to train, re- and up-skill, and eventually hire the next generation of tech talent. And the results will benefit not only M&T in its hiring efforts, but also all other tech companies within Western New York as well as the community able to take advantage of its training programs.



Significant **labor cost savings**.  
Median salary for software developer  
**20% less** than national average.



**Eastern Standard Time**  
increases access to a large portion of the  
world's customers, including South American,  
Europe, Africa, and Australia during normal  
business hours



Buffalo Niagara is projected to see a  
**14.5% growth rate** in software  
developers over the next 5 years.

**Be in Buffalo**  
Powered by, INVEST BUFFALO NIAGARA



### Innovative people. Inspiring places.

Invest Buffalo Niagara teamed up with local employers, partners, and longtime investors to launch a talent attraction campaign showcasing all the extraordinary ways there are to Be in Buffalo. Together, we're working to introduce—or reintroduce—an entire generation of ambitious young professionals to a Buffalo they thought they knew—a Buffalo still grounded by accessibility but freshly reeling with energy and boundless opportunity.

### Recruiters toolkit.

**BeinBuffalo.com** also hosts all the tools WNY employers need to land that perfect candidate: copy, imagery, videos, sell sheet, presentations, job posting submission, relocation guide, relocation gift box, and more!



### EASILY ACCESSIBLE

100 daily flights with non-stop service to 21 cities and 24 airports. Average one-way fare is only \$184.

Source: U.S. Department of Transportation – Consumer Airfare Report – Q1 2020



### 5 MILLION PEOPLE FLY THE FRIENDLY SKIES FROM BUFFALO ANNUALLY

Source: U.S. Department of Transportation – Bureau of Transportation Statistics – 2020

#### DIRECT FLIGHT TIMES FROM BUFFALO

Boston, MA	1 hour 20 minutes	Atlanta, GA	2 hours 10 minutes
New York, NY	1 hour 30 minutes	Minneapolis, MN	2 hours 15 minutes
Washington, DC	1 hour 30 minutes	Phoenix, AZ	4 hours 45 minutes
Chicago, IL	1 hour 50 minutes	Las Vegas, NV	4 hours 50 minutes

# SUPPORT GROUPS

Another strength of Buffalo Niagara's talent pipeline is the IT support groups from which companies can recruit. The region has a passionate and supportive workforce. Below is a short list of support organizations throughout Buffalo Niagara, their membership on meetup.com, and an excerpt of their self-stated mission.

## *BuffaloDevs Slack Channel*

- 900+ members

A community of developers and IT workers, in or interested in the Buffalo region.

## *Python Buffalo*

- 500+ members

This group is for bringing together people in Buffalo who are interested in everything Python. Whether you are a beginner or expert please join for meetings and presentations about new and old Python techniques and technologies.

## *Startup Tech Unleashed*

- 800+ members

StartupTech Unleashed Inc was created by the need for new and existing business startups to help foster growth and nurture ideas from the conception stage to global domination. We will be focusing on startups, technology & social innovation.

## *Buffalo Game Space*

- 800+ members

The Game Space aspires to create a place where artists, musicians, coders, and designers can freely collaborate and create games of all types.

## *Buffalo JS (javascript)*

- 500+ members

JavaScript Manifest Destiny: "Whatever program can be written in JavaScript eventually WILL be written in JavaScript." - Isaac Schlueter

## *Inclusive Tech Buffalo*

- 400+ members

We are a group of individuals looking to meet, educate, and learn from others in the Buffalo tech community. We focus on providing a safe space for women and underrepresented groups; however, anyone else interested in what we do is also welcome.

## *Full Stack Buffalo*

- 300+ members

We are a group of developers from several different communities. Our meetups are not necessarily language or tech stack specific. Whether you are a backend, frontend or full stack developer, engineer, or specialize in another area of web development, join us.

## *Buffalo AI (Artificial Intelligence)*

- 300+ members

Discussion of all kinds of cool technologies revolving around AI such as Siri, Alexa, Google Home, etc. and the algorithms surrounding them.

## One of the most powerful university-based supercomputers in the country

University at Buffalo Center for Computational Research (CCR) provides UB researchers and affiliated partners, including industry, with access to high performing computing and visualization resources for software development, computational science, advanced database engineering, big data analytics, and other data driven sciences.

- Housed in a 4,000 sq ft machine room
- More than 1Pflop/s of peak performance capacity
- Industrial cluster alone consists of 216 HP SL230 Gen8 servers
- Visualization laboratory featuring a tiled display wall and a VisDuo 3D projection



# INCENTIVE HIGHLIGHTS

Buffalo Niagara is perfectly suited for your expansion or relocation. Available talented labor, unparalleled market access, and a proven track-record of success make your decision easy. Come grow your business with us.

## Excelsior Jobs Program

The Excelsior Jobs Program provides job creation and investment incentives to firms in targeted industries like insurance. Firms that create and maintain new jobs or make significant financial investment are eligible to apply for up to four, **fully refundable** tax credits. Businesses claim the credits over a 10 year period.

### *Potential Benefit*

- **The Excelsior Jobs Tax Credit:** A credit of 6.85% of wages per new job to cover a portion of the associated payroll cost.
- **The Excelsior Investment Tax Credit:** Valued at 2% of qualified investments.
- **The Excelsior Real Property Tax Credit:** Available to firms locating in certain distressed areas and to firms in targeted industries that meet higher employment and investment thresholds (Regionally Significant Project).

Program participation and the amount of credits authorized is at the discretion of the Commissioner of Economic Development.

### *Eligibility Criteria*

- A substantial commitment to growth – either in employment or through investing significant capital in a New York facility.
- The Job Growth Track comprises 75% of the program.
- 25% is set aside for the Investment Track firms who have at least 50 employees and make significant new capital investments in a New York facility and which meet a benefit-cost threshold of at least \$10 of investment and new wages for every \$1 of tax credit.

As detailed in the charts below, every firm approved for participation in the program is eligible to apply for the Jobs Tax Credit, the Investment Tax Credit, and the R&D Tax Credit. Only certain categories of firms are eligible to also apply for the Real Property Tax Credit.

### *Job Growth Track | Minimum Eligibility Criteria*

Back Office  
**25 JOBS**

Software Development  
**5 JOBS**

**Minimum Benefit Cost Ratio = 10:1** • Total investment, wages and benefits / Excelsior Jobs program Tax Credits

## START-UP NY

New York's groundbreaking initiative, is transforming communities across the state into tax-free sites for new and expanding businesses through affiliations with public and private universities, colleges and community colleges. Businesses can operate 100% NYS tax-free for 10 years. No income tax, business, corporate, state or local taxes, sales and property taxes, or franchise fees on or near academic campuses. In addition, businesses may qualify for additional incentives.

### *Potential Benefit*

- Approved companies are state-tax free for 10 years (e.g. business/corporate taxes, sales taxes and property taxes)
- Employees in participating companies are state income tax exempt for 5 years (up to 10,000 employees)
- For the second 5 years, employees are state tax exempt on income up to:
  - \$200,000 for individuals
  - \$250,000 for head of households
  - \$300,000 for joint returns

### *Eligibility Criteria*

To be eligible for the START-UP NY program, **a company must either be a start-up, new to NYS, a graduate of a certified incubator, or an NYS-company that can clearly demonstrate that it is expanding with net-new job creation.** The company must apply directly to the particular sponsoring college or university with which it plans to partner. The company must align with the academic mission of the sponsoring college or university. Each participating academic institution has created a campus plan, designating particular buildings and land as tax-free zones. Eligible properties are on campus, near campus, or may also be controlled by a nonprofit entity (e.g. Industrial Development Agency) affiliated with the school.

### *General Info*

An eligible company should begin by thinking about how it would potentially affiliate with a college or university. There are countless ways a company can establish their alignment with the academic mission of their sponsor, such as:

- Jointly submit research and development grant applications.
- Develop a new curriculum to create a steady stream of job candidates with exactly the right skill set(s).
- Develop an internship program or other experiential learning opportunities for students

Each participating school has submitted a plan that outlines the specific industries it is targeting for this program.



Red Inc.



TROVE



Patient Pattern



## Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)

Employers that do business in New York State can trim their labor costs through employment based tax credits that may save your business money by cutting federal tax liability.

### *Potential Benefit*

The Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) offers employers up to \$2,400 in federal tax savings for hiring low-income individuals with barriers to employment. Qualified individuals must complete at least 120 hours of work to qualify for the partial WOTC of \$1,500 and over 400 hours for the full \$2,400 credit.

### *Eligibility Criteria*

To qualify employers for the credit, individuals must be verified as members of a targeted group. The groups include:

- People who receive Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- Veterans who: Receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits - or - have a service related disability
- Ex-felons
- People (age 18-39) who live in a federal empowerment zone or rural county
- Disabled persons receiving rehabilitation services
- Youth (age 16-17) who live in a federal empowerment zone (summer employment only)
- People (age 18-39) who received Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits
- People who receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- People who receive Long-Term Family Assistance
- Long Term Unemployment Recipients (LTUR)

# REAL ESTATE OPTIONS

Buffalo Niagara's office market is affordable and stable across the urban and suburban landscapes of the region. Averaging \$19.50/sq. ft., the office market provides significant savings over other major metro areas and the 13.5% vacancy rate is on par with the Nation. New office construction continues to increase, with 1,000,000 sq. ft. projected to come online in 2021.

## Lancaster Square at Gates Circle

TM Montante Development is transforming the former Millard Fillmore Gates Circle Hospital site into Lancaster Square; a vibrant, mixed-use, urban place featuring neighborhood retail, modern residential units, and commercial office space.

The site is within one mile of the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus, Buffalo State College and Canisius College, and is adjacent to the Linwood Avenue bike lane to Downtown Buffalo.



### SPACE AVAILABLE

**Available Commercial Suites** 1,400 sq. ft. & 4,500 sq. ft.

**Parking Ramp for 750 vehicles**

**Build to Suit Parcels** Up To 30,000 sq. ft. Floorplates

## Class A Office Tower

Buffalo's largest office building and home to M&T Bank's Tech Hub. Nearly 360,000 SF is available across multiple floors and use types. The building enjoys a renovated façade and landscape with ample amenities in the immediate surrounding areas.



### SPACE AVAILABLE

**Open Floor Plans** 22,000 sq. ft.

Multiple connected floors with private stairwell access

15 passenger elevators

**Four-level parking ramp** connected to the plaza and underground parking garage

Multiple spaces to host business functions and events

## HANSA Workspace

HANSA is a first-class coworking space, with both the collaborative space and private shared office space to fit almost anyone's needs. For our Canadian friends considering dipping their toe in the U.S. market, they also offer mailbox services! Oh...and we have to mention the coffee!

[www.hansaworkspace.com](http://www.hansaworkspace.com)

## Coworking at dig

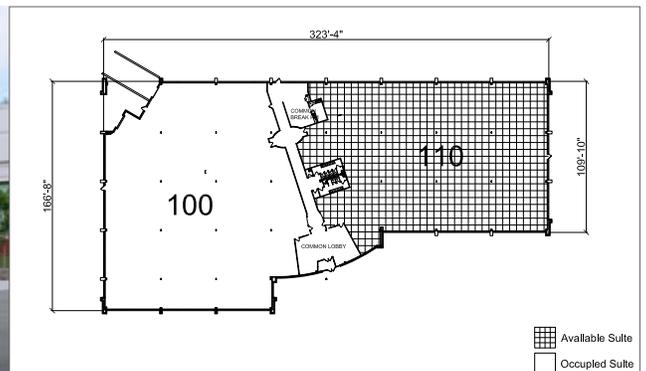
Dig (design innovation garage) is coworking and event space located within the Innovation Center. People representing all types of businesses throughout our community come to dig to share ideas, build business models, work on new projects, and collaborate.

[innovationcenterbuffalo.org/spaces/coworking/](http://innovationcenterbuffalo.org/spaces/coworking/)



## 105 CrossPoint – 20,116 sq. ft.

Locate your business in Buffalo Niagara's largest office park! Home to multiple Fortune 500 companies including GEICO, Citibank, Fidelis Care, and M&T Bank, CrossPoint Business Park is uniquely suited to support state-of-the-art corporate headquarters, expansive call centers, and regional operation hubs. The site features abundant parking, less than 1 mile to interstate highways, 15 minutes to the Buffalo Niagara International Airport, and 20 minutes to downtown Buffalo. Custom Build-Out and Build-to-Suit options available. Call Uniland for details: 716-834-5000



**Suite 110 Floor Area** 20,116 sq. ft.

“ You can't calculate on a spreadsheet hard work and grit. The folks in Buffalo Niagara have those attributes in spades. ”

- Frank Ewing, CEO, AML RightSource



## How to Attract the Best Talent in a Strong Labor Market

Recruiting talent is a priority for any organization in a tight labor market. From manufacturing to information technology, the demand for skilled employees is at an all-time high, and companies need intelligent strategies to attract value-add candidates.

On average, companies lose \$14,000 for every job that remains open for three months and they face compounding losses with every open position, as numerous resources become dedicated to picking up the slack, or working to fill the position.

Here are five key tips to help your company attract the right talent despite the tight labor market:

### 1. Build a strong employer brand

Candidates today are savvy, and they will research your company just as much as you research them. Leverage your social media pages and company website to create a relevant and meaningful experience that makes a candidate want to work with you.

### 2. Mobilize your employee networks

Often, your current employees can be your best tool for finding that next great hire. That is why 37% of best-in-class companies are engaging their employees in employee referral programs to funnel qualified candidates to their recruitment teams.

### 3. Treat the job description as a sales pitch

A job description is not only about marketing an open job at your company, it's your first point of contact with job seekers. It's essential to provide compelling reasons for a candidate to want to work at your company. You want to brand your organization as lively, productive, and engaging, so be sure to provide the correct impression! Include a clear job title and defined career path to allow more candidates to interact with your job openings.

### 4. Determine what skills are really mandatory

Describing the main skills necessary to succeed is essential in attracting qualified applicants, but avoid a laundry list. This is likely to confuse the applicant as far as what skills are a priority and will also eliminate many candidates who may be a great fit, but don't feel they meet every single requirement.

### 5. Think about mobile first

More than 50% of jobs over LinkedIn are viewed through mobile phones, which means every word counts. Keep your description short, concise, and bulleted for easy reading.

For more information on this topic please contact Acara (formerly known as Superior Group): [acarasolutions.com](http://acarasolutions.com) | 1.800.568.8310

#### Average Turnover Rate

U.S.A.  
9.2%

Buffalo Niagara  
8.6%

“ Word continues to get out that Buffalo is a great place to live and a great place to do business. That's really helped us attract talent from outside this area, from much bigger cities even, that in the past, might not have entertained the idea of coming here. ”

- Gary Quenneville, Upstate New York Regional Executive, KeyBank

# BUSINESS EXPANSION CHECKLIST

When starting to consider your business expansion, here's a helpful checklist of key items to consider in the site selection process:

- Have a **solid business plan** defining your goals and needs.
- Secure the necessary **financing**.
- Identify possible **geographic locations** for your business.
- **Connect with experts**, like Invest Buffalo Niagara, in your region that can help facilitate your project.
- Develop and share a **Request for Information (RFI)** to quickly gather the information and data most important to your decision-making process. You'll want to make sure that the location you choose has the right business resources available now and in the future. These considerations may include:
  - Regional demographic information
  - Real estate options
  - Workforce availability
  - Labor costs
  - Operational costs
  - Any other data that is important to your company's success
- **Evaluate** RFI responses.
- Conduct **site visits** in the "short list" of regions you would like to personally visit.
- **Choose a location** you – and your employees – will want to call home.
- Initiate **incentives negotiation** with each region/state still under consideration.
- Engage in lease or **purchase negotiations** with land/building owner.
- Ribbon cutting!
- Get to know your new community and network, network, **network!**

**Notes/Questions:**

## TIPS:

### #1

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*Important to properly sequence real estate, with incentives, public relations, etc.*

### #2

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*When preparing an RFI, it is important to provide project parameters (e.g. projected job creation; capital investment; type of operation; estimated decision-making timeline).*

### #3

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*It is the responsibility of each EDO to completely and accurately respond to your RFI in a timely manner.*

### #4

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*Avoid location biases based on preconceived notions – let the data speak for itself.*

NEARLY  
**150 MILES**  
OF BIKE LANES IN THE  
CITY OF BUFFALO



**~21 MINUTE  
AVERAGE  
COMMUTE TIME**



  
**205 SUNNY  
DAYS PER  
YEAR**



  
**21  
COLLEGES &  
UNIVERSITIES**



  
**#3 TOP  
FOOD CITY IN  
THE U.S.**  
- Travel & Leisure



**PRO SPORTS**  
PROUD HOME OF THE  
BUFFALO BILLS AND  
BUFFALO SABRES



SUPPORTED BY,

**nationalgrid**

## INVESTING IN THE FUTURE OF BUFFALO NIAGARA

AAA of Western & Central New York\*

Acara Solutions, Inc.

Allegany County Industrial  
Development Agency

Amherst Industrial Development Agency

ARC Building Partners

Astronics Corporation

Buffalo Niagara Partnership\*

Buffalo Urban Development Corporation

Calspan

Cattaraugus County Industrial Development  
Agency

Chautauqua County Industrial Development  
Agency

City of Buffalo

Delaware North\*

Douglas Development

Empire State Development Corporation\*

Erie County

Erie County Industrial  
Development Agency\*

Ernst & Young, LLP\*

Evans Bank

Five Star Bank

Frey Electric Construction Company

Genesee County Economic  
Development Center

Hamburg Industrial Development Agency

Hanna Commercial Real Estate

Harris Beach, PLLC

Harter Secret & Emery LLP

Highmark BlueCross BlueShield  
of Western New York\*

Hodgson Russ LLP

HSBC Bank USA, NA\*

HUNT Real Estate Corporation

Hurwitz & Fine, P.C.

Independent Health

KeyBank, NA\*

Lippes Mathias Wexler Friedman LLP

Lockport Industrial Development Agency

Lumsden & McCormick, LLP

The Martin Group

Merchants Insurance Group\*

Moog Inc.\*

M&T Bank Corporation\*

National Fuel Gas Company\*

National Grid\*

Niagara County Department of  
Economic Development

Northwest Bank

NYSEG\*

Phillips Lytle LLP\*

Schutte Buffalo

Sonwil Distribution

The Buffalo News

TM Montante Development

Tops Markets, LLC\*

Tronconi Segerra & Associates LLP

Turner Construction Company

Uniland Development Company\*

Univera Healthcare

University at Buffalo

Walsh Duffield Companies, Inc.

Wegmans Food Markets

West Herr Automotive Group

WNY NYSCAR

Wyoming County Business Center

\*FOUNDING INVESTORS

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